COMBAT &HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association
Issue No. 32 March 1998

COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine Of The World Taiji Boxing Association
December 1997 Number 31

EDITOR

Erle Montaigue

ART DIRECTOR

Ben, Eli & Kataleenas Montaigue

INSPIRATION

Sandra Montaigue

USA

Al Krych

Canada

Mike Babin

Europe

Peter Smith

Ken Johnson

WTBA Secretary

Mause Eaglen

Internet & Computer Consultant To The WTBA & MTG.
Patrick Conley USA

Combat & Healing is independently owned and published for the international martial arts community, distributed worldwide. Opinions and views expressed in this magazine are **not necessarily those of the owners or editor.** In the interest of fair play in the martial arts community, everyone will be given a fair go. Articles go in to this magazine unedited apart from obvious spelling and grammatical and illegal items being edited.

POSTAL ADDRESS:
POB 792
Murwillumbah NSW 2484
Australia
(61-2) 6679 7145
Fax: 61-2-6679 7028
Email: Taiji@ozemail.com.au
http://www.ozemail.com.au/~taiji

Reproduction of any material without prior permission is strictly prohibited. All material remains under copyright to the publisher, MTG Publishing. Our eternal thanks to **Kevin Brennan** Editor in Chief Of **Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine** for his input.

Front Cover:
Mr Ng Siu-wing, our WTBA representative for Hong Kong

CONTENTS:

p. 1/ **Standing Qigong**
Michael Babin Ottawa Canada.
p. 4/ **From the Centre**
Josephine Anderson Canada
p. 7/ **Taiji, the Training**
John Humphries Australia
p. 9/ **Chicken Soup, a Taiji fable**
Mike Babin
p. 10/**Natural Movement**
Darrin Coe, USA
p. 12/**WTBA News**
p. 13/**To Raise the Qi**
Erle
p. 15/**Instructor Profile: Annie Blackman.**
p. 17/**Are You Going to Protect Yourself**
Radoslaw Wojcjechowski, Poland
P. 18/**Erle Montaigue on Healing**

Congratulations to **Bob Young**, the new Editor for **Black Belt Magazine**.

Tai Chi International

Finally, a well balanced commercially available magazine on Taiji. Erle Montaigue is the Australasian Correspondent for this magazine and will have an article in each issue.

To subscribe: Write to: (Or ask your newsagent to get it in)
St Vincent's Publishing Co.
French Drove, Thorney
Peterborough PE6 0PH: England. Ph:/Fax **+44 (0)1733 270072**

Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine

The longest continually running Martial Arts Magazine in the world. Erle Montaigue has had a column since 1983. Back issues available.
POB 673, Manly NSW 2095, Australia.
You really should subscribe. Read in over 20 countries!

STANDING CHI-KUNG

Michael Babin

Learning traditional methods of standing ch'i-kung, whether stationary or moving, can be an effective long-term method of improving physical/emotional health as well as an essential aspect of the serious study of any internal Chinese martial art.

On a self-healing level, chi-kung teaches you to generate, refine, store and circulate internal energy by harmonising the body, breath and mind.

Body

You must "abide by the lower tan-tien" (the area roughly between the navel and the top of the pubic bone) as this is said to be our centre of gravity as well as containing many vital organs.

Tan-tien literally means "elixir field"; a concept derived from the ancient Taoist alchemical experiments used to try and discover the elixir, or formula, of immortality by heating and distilling a variety of minerals and herbs. {Gunpowder, liquid mercury and a variety of metal alloys being among the many accidental, and sometimes beneficial, by-products of such experiments}.

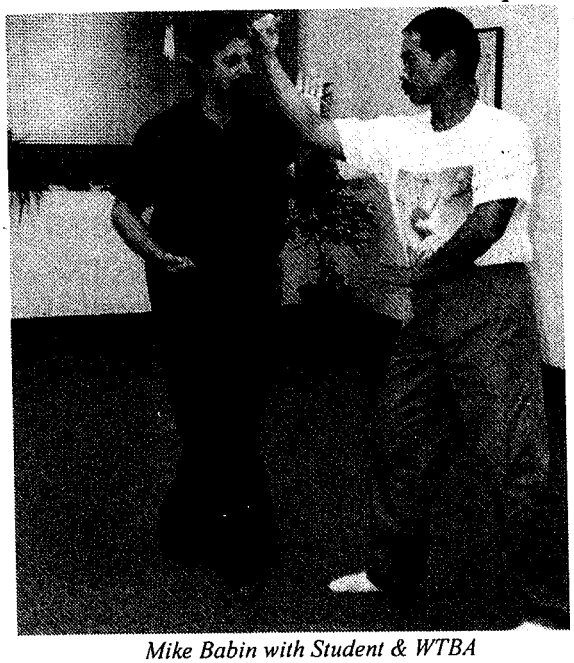
During their meditative practices, the Taoists experienced sensations of warmth and movement in the lower abdomen when they focused their attention on that part of the body. They thought of it as a process similar to the one in which they used a bellows (the lungs) to fan the fire (the yang "heat") under a crucible (the lower abdomen) containing substances (blood, the chi you were born with, hormonal fluids, food & drink) that could be blended and refined to distil higher forms of chi.

Even though the body doesn't seem to do much work aside from holding itself up in a relatively still fashion, it is actually re-learning muscle usage and body mechanics

Even though the body doesn't seem to do much work aside from holding itself up in a relatively still fashion, it is actually re-learning muscle usage and body mechanics so that the spine is stretched, relaxed and energised to easily and efficiently support the head and internal organs. The legs and hips are loosened and strengthened while the knees re-relearn to naturally provide shock-absorption for the spine/head.

Using a standing as opposed to lying or sitting posture also means there is less chance of getting drowsy. As the joints and body loosen without getting "mushy", the ch'i is better able to circulate

as it is supposed to. Think of it as the chi being circulated through hoses, which are often partially impeded by kinks of varying degrees. The chi inside cannot flow as it should until the kinks are removed.



Mike Babin with Student & WTBA instructor, James Chan

As standing becomes more natural for you and the lungs expand and the joints relax, blood circulation improves, often lowering high blood pressure and preventing/alleviating conditions like varicose veins and haemorrhoids.

You do have to be careful physically about your posture. Even if you practice correctly, your legs and lower back may get quite sore at first, but this is normal, especially if you are stiff/ tense by nature. In addition, make sure that your knees stay aligned over the toes and that you are not leaning backwards by the end of your practice time.

Breath

Your goal is natural breathing, especially in terms of improving your health, and this involves gently inflating the lower abdomen when inhaling and deflating the lower abdomen when exhaling. In this way, you slowly re-train the diaphragm to rise and fall over a greater range so that the lungs are used more efficiently.

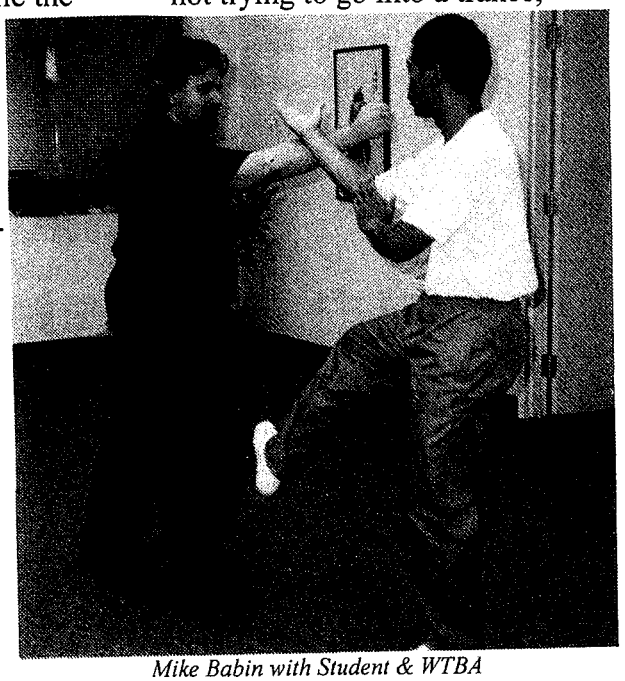
This also helps to augment the capacity of the lungs while the greater diaphragmatic movements produce a massaging effect on the internal organs, thus improving the functions of the digestive, reproductive, urinary and endocrine systems. As a result of this, "internal massage", it is quite common to get quite "gassy" when practising — so don't get embarrassed if you belch or pass wind.

It is important to remember that "sinking the qi to the tantien"; does not mean forcing the lungs to over-inflate or swallowing air or distending your belly by forcing it outwards. You want your entire lower torso to learn to GENTLY expand and compress in time with the breath, not turn yourself into a puffer-fish!

Mind

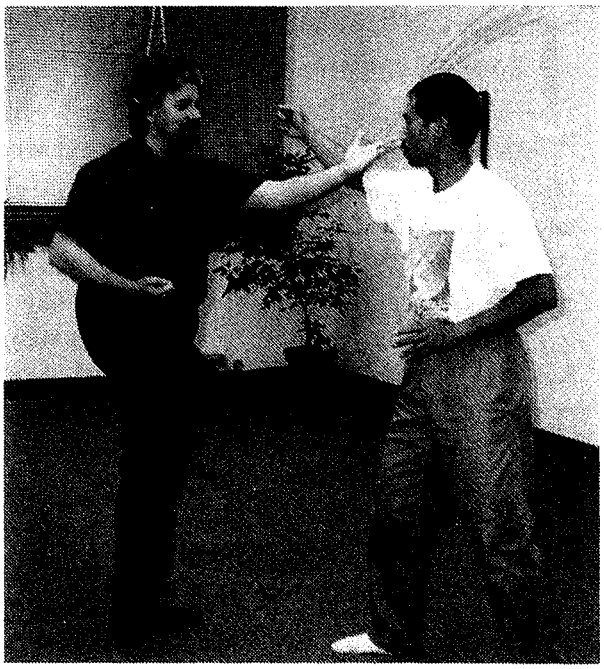
Although it it's difficult to do, the conscious mind must be encouraged to give-up it's obsession with endless mental activity; the Chinese refer to it as the "monkey" because it's always making noise and scampering around causing trouble.

In the beginning, it is important to concentrate on "quieting" the mind as opposed to consciously trying to circulate the energy. You're not trying to go into a trance, hypnotise yourself, leave your body, communicate with spirits or become superman



Mike Babin with Student & WTBA instructor, James Chan

— just relaxed and connected to "what-is" as opposed to separated from it.



Paying attention to the area below the navel is one method to achieve this; silently counting your breaths is another; creating your own short phrase (e.g. "This calms and heals".) and repeating it silently to yourself works for many; practising outside in the midst of trees or flowers (weather permitting) and contemplating what is around you is also a good way of quieting the mind.

You may experience a variety of phenomena while standing for longer periods of time. Please, remember that they're harmless and will stop as your training progresses.

You may experience a variety of phenomena while standing for longer periods of time. Please, remember that they're harmless and will stop as your training progresses. Conversely, if you feel nothing unusual, despite training twice a day, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have wasted your time. Each of us is different in how we experience the meditative process.

Conclusion

Your first many months of training are designed to begin creating and storing a plentiful supply of high quality ch'i; hence eating a balanced diet of natural foods while moderating your sexual activities and consumption of alcohol as these drain ch'i from the body and/or stress the kidneys.

As in all aspects of your training, whether you are a beginner or experienced meditator or martial artist, it is pointless to learn bits and pieces of many systems or confuse knowing one or two methods/forms with knowing an entire system.

Any competent method of standing ch'i-kung can, in the long run, make you a better person and a better martial artist. The methods are simple — and "magical" in the best sense of that word — if you work at them!

New Tapes from Moon Ta-gu Books

MTG162
Push Hands Corrections Volume Four

This tape carries on with this excellent series delving into the intricacies of push hands at its most advanced level.

MTG163
The Ninth Qi Disruptive Form

This tape has not been edited as yet, and may not be for some time. The reason is that these forms are so special and I do not wish to find all nine published by someone else before I am able to get around to it myself in my series "internal Gung-fu, The Complete System". It is only available to fully qualified WTBA instructors at present!

MTG164
Small Frame Form Volume Four

A must for anyone who wishes to take their taijiquan on to the internal level.

March Camp: From the Centre

By Josephine Anderson (Canada)

If one had to summarise the most important lesson learned at the camps, it is "from the Centre," not simply in terms of the form itself, but as it applies to our daily lives.

Movement from the Centre as Sloppy Tai Chi

The Tai Chi form is movement from the centre. The form appears "sloppy," like a rag doll dropped down and then lifted by other hands. The doll's body is soft and malleable to the slightest pressure from the outside. But once the pressure is applied, her body contracting in on itself, her limbs fling out simultaneously. The doll's arms and legs are without will, or muscular tension, almost like dead weight. And yet, an arm or a leg, which is a passive element controlled from and responsive to the centre, is still vigorous and very much alive. Like the rag doll, the expansion of our energy is dependent upon the degree to which we have abandoned ourselves to a deep centre; that is, a centre whose source is outside us, but to which we belong as we uncover its power in the practice of our form.

The form appears "sloppy," like a rag doll dropped down and then lifted by other hands.

How grotesque to see the way the rag doll moves on stage: falling under the impact of setbacks, yet popping up again. Each time she gets up, she seems freer, more independent than before. She exhibits a certain "shiftlessness" and daring in her pranks. From their succession a character springs forth. And yet, she retains that endearing child-like elasticity — flopping down with her hands raised in the air, getting up with her hands sweeping down. This simultaneous strength and vulnerability is the effect of delivering herself up to the outside forces of the drama, stretching her personality to the limits so that she becomes the sheer energy of life itself — a series of impromptu adjustments to its "shifting" harmonies. What an astonishing equilibrium she has achieved — "a finesse of sloppiness" — between the activity of the centre and the passivity of her limbs, between the possession of the entire world-stage and a "carelessness" as to what may happen next.

Her moving out from the centre and her moving back into the centre are the two essential components of the Tai Chi Form. They harmonise, like the breaking of waves onto the shore and their withdrawal again into the ocean depths.

What constitutes the dynamic of waves is a blending of the active and passive forces. The waves are "passively active" in that they are "possessed onwards" by the mounting depths of the ocean itself, and "actively passive," because they are "pulled" back into its receding centre. But more than this, the advancing and receding forces themselves converge: the

waves, which pull back from shore, and those which are advancing, approach each other in inverse amplitudes, and meet with the peak of one wave "inside" the trough of the other. A huge tidal wave is formed, and it rolls towards shore in a series of diminishing waves, until it arrives as nothing more than a stream of water.

The wave is dissipated there, lost, and yet consummated in a newly created union with the land, absorbing its salts and minerals, and taking them back into the ocean depths.

The wave is dissipated there, lost, and yet consummated in a newly created union with the land, absorbing its salts and minerals, and taking them back into the ocean depths. The waves from both sides, which have completed a cycle of work, meet and interact again, and the whole cycle is reset into motion. The apparent activity of the waves rests upon the motion of the sea itself, and beyond that, upon the motion of a universal centre.

We see how Tai Chi mimics nature, and, to that extent, teaches us about our own human nature. Having explored and developed the interaction of the limbs with the centre — of the passive with the active — we find ourselves, without realising it, becoming masters of the inner life, and its rhythm between abandonment and self-restraint, reliance and autonomy, renunciation and growth.

Movement from the Centre as Small Circle Tai Chi

Truly, the ruling factor in the doll's strength is her abandonment to the broad centring forces of the world-stage. Outward abandonment, however, means inward retrieval, a concentration of those outside forces within us, and the close integrity of our limbs with the centre that can be achieved through small movements. As such, "Sloppy Tai Chi" is, in its own way, and can lead to Small Circle Tai Chi.

In each movement of the form we entertain some goal of action, and to this goal a greater co-ordination of limbs is directed. And nowhere is this more apparent than in the hands, the most articulate extremity, where the mind's intention (the insubstantial) and the body's action (matter) meet in that one moment of communicative force (brute force is reserved for times when we have no choice, but here, we are concerned with energy in its healing and spiritual capacity).

How often do we see practitioners of Tai Chi neglect the hands because they have no sense of the "the action," and have lost "the centre" through which a greater interdependence of limbs delivers the action. They carry their upper body in one block movement over the lower body, and their hands, like "stumps of shoulder," can do no more than trace a roughly parallel course with the centre. Their hand motion is degraded to a function outside the centre, too inarticulate to be contained by the unity of the action.

How often do we see practitioners of Tai Chi neglect the hands because they have no sense of the "the action," and have lost "the centre"

The motion of the hands should not merely "mimic" the centre, but occur naturally, as the final expression in a continuous and directed path from the centre. As natural action — action which sets out to achieve a goal — it expresses the internal structure rather just enacting the formal appearance of the movement. The hand motion is, therefore, small, smaller than other motions, the expression of chi concentrated to its final degree, where action either succeeds or fails in achieving the mark.

If we are trying to capture the mind's intention in perceptible form, then motion must assume the elusive quality of thought. At the very moment of its surfacing, it is gone. Harsh lines are softened, wide curves are narrowed, the hand's gestures merely suggestive in order to ensure the efficient carrying forward of the mind's intention

from one movement to the next. Hence, there are no separate postures — no excess of movements exceeding their place — only their reciprocal containment within the work of mind.

With time, the thought of the task is no longer necessary. The mind is aware only of itself, and conducts the flow of energy through the body as one movement.

Josephine at Mini Camp 97: 3rd from Left

It is in the interstices of small movement, then, that we find room for spiritual growth. Suggestive, elusive, yet definite and unerring, our hands become the signs for something hidden, something bigger than we are.

We float about minuscule in its presence, unable to fathom it, and, at times, besieged by it: we fail, we get sick, and we grow old. But as we are being continually tried and tested, we either break under the strain, or we reanimate ourselves to a higher calling. It is at this juncture that Tai Chi works with us to increase the chances of success. The oceanic forces are "centred within myself" for my own advantage (the power of my action), while they, in turn, appropriate me to their centre for their own advantage (the power of their action upon the world).

We are children; dolls come to life, tracing figures in the wet sand of the seashore, divided from the end of the earth by an endless expanse of water. We step into the shallow water and look seaward for the drama of the sand-figures to unfold itself against the misty horizon. We see our ship, remote and isolated, to which we cling, with our hearts as the source of our power, the centre of our order. But as the ship seems to be falling over the edge, where sky and water meet, we lose our sense of direction. We lose ourselves, and we panic. We dash deeper into the water in pursuit of the ship, but with our hand lifted to the sailor on the bow, we are thrown off course by the winds and waves. Nothing is out there. Our ship appears to have fallen off into the night — just water and more water, black waves threatening to engulf us. It's as if the world had barely started again, before land and animals, before the touch of God's hand divided one thing from another for the sake of our human eyes. But one gesture from us, and another, and soon we've turned ourselves into a current in the sea, drinking up the whole abyss, one drop at a time, and catching up with that golden sail in the void.

After each incoming surf, we find it that much easier to regain our equilibrium. We learn to ride on the crest of waves rather than get caught in their mix. We perceive that not only are subject to the great oceanic forces, but with Tai Chi, we can regulate and shrink the aperture through which the maelstrom is released into us, and eased away from us.

I'm getting closer to the ship. I now know that the ship has not fallen off into the abysmal night, but rises up in my interior world, little by little, until all things are summed up into that single peak of a sail, which reaches for the clouds, and becomes linked to the Great Centre.

Taiji the training

What it handles and what it will result in.

By John Humphries

Your Taiji, your Supreme ultimate, is very personalised. Most things done and taught as being Taiji are not. They are false, Bureau, and useless.

Real Taiji is dramatically effective. It goes to the heart of the matter and creates unbelievable results.

Health and body welfare.

A person starting in their Thirties, and training moderately, could expect to live 25 years beyond expectancy. And live in vigorous health and strength to the end.

Mentally, they will be exercised and challenged every day, ceaselessly working to understand and bring in ever-higher concepts of life and practise. Even the most basic form is subject to limitless refinement and improvement.

As training becomes firmly establi + shed and you learn how to use your whole body in various actions, you can begin to take control of your daily affairs

So month in and month out, year in and year out you will be reaching ever higher levels and getting closer to perfection, which is a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual construct.

Who takes the time and effort to enjoy and perfect Washing dishes, tying shoelaces, driving a car, and answering a phone?

As training becomes firmly established and you learn how to use your whole body in various actions, you can begin to take control of your daily affairs, which are really only Taiji forms done quickly, unconvincingly, and generally as irksome chores.

Who takes the time and effort to enjoy and perfect Washing dishes, tying shoelaces, driving a car, and answering a phone? These things, and everything else, can be brought into your Taiji training and practised joyfully and profitably, and finally mastered.

Emotional problems, social problems, family problems, work relationship problems, can be accessed and trained as part of the way. Things that are devastating to your happiness and comfort, and normally result in uncontrollable anger and upset, become a practice ground for training your love and peace and effectiveness.

You can watch these things rise, work with them, and watch them depart. You

may not be happy with the way that you handle them, or the way that they turn out, but you will be handling them as effectively as you are currently able to, and the results will far surpass what you have previously been able to do.

When you see a problem as a test from the universe, something that will and must come, you no longer react with "why me, why me?" But get down and do the work you came here for.

For those of a religious nature, who might hope to escape fiery trial by prayer, the Bible Foley says, "nope!"

In the Old Testament, "I will demand of you, and answer you me", and "gird up your loins and quit you like a man."

Perhaps not very comforting instructions, but certainly specific and plain.

A person is not really a material being that sometimes has a spiritual experience. He is a spiritual being having a material experience. For the sake of gaining a learning experience on earth, he is hypnotised, as it were; into for getting his vast, powerful perfection, so he has to struggle with endless suffering and against impossible odds until enlightenment bursts upon him.

Then he realises his true nature and substance, his power, authority, and beauty.

When someone is able to do this, you have the Christ, a Jesus of Lazarus, able to walk on water, heal the sick, raise the dead, feed multitudes, get money from a fish's mouth, rise from the dead, and change the course of history.

Now because getting to this state requires dropping misconceptions, it is a relatively simple (but not easy) process. You only have to open to reality.

Taiji moving meditation is a good way to develop this because it is a progressive opening of consciousness to what is the ordered movement of the universe.

So in Taiji you have a perfect physical culture able to make the body strong, flexible, explosively powerful and enduring.

For those of a religious nature, who might hope to escape fiery trial by prayer, the Bible Foley says, "nope!"

You have a perfect emotional culture, able to make your life happy and serene. Though storms rage all around, you have a calm centre, rather like the eye of the hurricane. You can take untoward emotions: jealously hurt, anger, resentment, offended pride, and take them apart and remodel them into something more useful to your aims.

You have a perfect mental culture-a form of contemplation that by passes the mind's defences and resistance to being trained, by coming through the back door. Giving the mind an interesting game to work with, so it doesn't realise it has knuckled under to a full blast training system.

You have a perfect spiritual culture, because bit by bit you establish ties, and connection to, and finally totally unified identification with the universe. You have become the mouthpiece of God. You are the love of God, the life of God, the truth of God, the wisdom of God.

You are no longer a little person struggling to be nice with your own little store of love and patience and intelligence and virtue, which are, of course, never enough.

Instead you can dip into and freely use immense treasures of these things. The only proviso being that you cannot think of them as being yours, any more than a fish swimming in the ocean should consider the ocean to be a personal possession.

A Taiji Fable... Chicken Soup

Michael Babin, 1997

Once upon a time, there was a master chef whose chicken soup was renowned throughout the land for its healing ability — it made ordinary homemade soup seem tasteless by comparison and as to the canned variety! The chef had laboured over a lifetime to perfect his recipe — the making of the basic stock had been a gift from his parents and then, over the years many had contributed to his understanding of the making of it. After much experimentation, he had finally thrown away his formal recipe and now the ingredients, in their correct proportions, seemed to find their way into his pot as if a spirit was guiding his hands.

When people started to benefit from its marvellous healing properties, word spread and many came to _¡his doorstep — most wanting only to be fed and healed, Few seemed interested in taking the time and the effort to learn how to feed themselves by learning to make this simple broth that was both delicious and sustaining.

Some were content to copy the recipe and most of these were subsequently disappointed that their soups lacked the savour and the magic that they had experienced at the chef's home. The majority immediately gave-up trying to make chicken soup. A happy few were satisfied with their initial results and, over time, went on, after much trial-and-error, to develop their own recipe. It didn't quite have the same taste and benefit of the original soup; but was sustaining and they never seemed to tire of the taste. A miserable few sniffed the soup or saw the ingredients stacked on the master's table and immediately thought "I can do better than that". A few even made something edible and eventually became relatively famous for their product — although its healing ability was nowhere in evidence — and they never gave the master chef any credit for his inspirational role. And, unfortunately, a few of the latter made soup that poisoned those who ate of it and in such an insidious manner that the victims never realised it until it was too late.

The master chef had always been willing to write down and share his recipe and it saddened him to know that so few were willing to take the time to learn to make their own recipe; but were content to eat the inferior commercial brands that were easier to prepare. No-one ever thought to ask him for the real 'secret' ingredients, the ones that he had never recorded or spoken of because they seemed so obvious to him: Use the best ingredients, take your time in the preparation and enjoy it as much as you savour each mouthful of the soup itself.

Natural Movement

by Darrin F. Coe

From Shotokan to Aikido to Taijiquan, one hears instructors and Sensei's and Kyosa's and Shihans and Sifu's continually talking about it as if it was the secret to the universe and when one masters it one is truly a martial artist and fighter. What is it? It is the all elusive "Natural Movement".

So just what is natural movement? We hear about it all the time. We are told to, "Move naturally" and to, "be natural in your movement", or we hear, "this may seem unnatural now but it is because your body is not used to moving naturally, you must get used to it". Excuse me! What is that supposed to mean? Well, in this article I will endeavor to shed some light on this elusive thing known as natural movement so that we can all start training and stop being baffled by BS.

Many experts tell us that to move naturally is to use efficient movement that is in line with the laws of physics, using the whole body in a connected manner. Others tell us that natural movement is circular in nature. The definition that I prefer is this and I've borrowed it from Erle Montaigue, "Natural movement is the movement we do".

You see I think there has been some confusion in the martial arts, we keep referring to natural movement when we should be referring to functional movement. Truly, any movement we can make or learn to make as natural entities constitutes natural movement (that is unless you don't consider human's part of natural existence). Therefore, even a jump, spinning, hook kick is a natural movement, but it is not a functional movement.

Well, in this article I will endeavor to shed some light on this elusive thing known as natural movement so that we can all start training and stop being baffled by BS

If you watch the animal kingdom you will begin to understand the difference between natural movement and functional movement. Animals simply do things that will accomplish a need; their movement is functional to their purpose. When the Nile crocodile wants to kill, it latches onto it's prey and performs several underwater rolls, this is functional for drowning it's victim. It could attempt to strike it and knock it out using it's stubby legs which would be natural because the Croc can do this but it would not be functional. We need to begin looking at our martial arts in the same light.

For instance, you are practising stance work in the Shotokan system, using long stances and C-steps. These

are natural movements because you are able to do them and they are functional for building leg muscle endurance but they are not functional for quick, dynamic combat/fight situations. The more efficient, connected and structurally sound the movement is the more functional it is, but it is not more natural; this is because as humans we seem to be able to learn just about any skill to the point where is can seem natural but there are some skills in the martial arts that simply are not fight functional.

For instance the high round house kick compared to the low round house kick; both kicks are natural but the low kick is much more fight functional. We could also compare tournament sparring practice to the practice of pushing hands. Both generate very natural movement but pushing hands is much more fight functional in that it generates skills that are useful at very close distances, which is where most one-to-one combat takes place.

In Taijiquan training one is not necessarily learning natural movement, one is learning functional movement. In Taijiquan we are taught to move in a relaxed, loose manner, while maintaining an awareness of our surroundings and ourselves. Watch a lioness as she hunts, this is exactly how she moves, and this way of moving is also much more fight functional. In Taijiquan we are also taught to attack explosively and viciously, utilising our whole body in small and large circular patterns. This is also how the great apes of Africa attack and fight. This is also the most functional way to engage a fight. The movements of the different Taijiquan forms, be they, Yang Lu-Ch'an's form, qi disruption forms or dim mak forms, are designed to teach us about functional, physical movement while at the same time helping us to unlock the limbic or reptilian brain which allows us to mentally become like animals in a fight situation, which is what I would call functional fight psychology.

So it seems that there is no such thing as natural movement because any movement is natural. What is important is the function of the movements you are learning.

Whenever you learn a new form or a new application you should always be considering the function of the movements and if you are doing them in a functional manner; that is efficiently, with you whole body and with sound physical structure.

Darrin Coe is the WTBA representative for the State of Colorado in the USA. He began his training under Jack & Beverly Gustafson, our representatives in the State of Minnesota, USA.

Erle Montaigue

Well, it has been some time since I travelled overseas to teach.

December 1998, I hope to be taking the whole Montaigue clan to Europe for the Christmas/ New Year period.

This is a holiday for myself and family, but I am sure that I will not get out of there without giving some form of workshop.

So it is my intent at this early stage to hold a one weekend workshop in Wales. At this stage I am looking at the first weekend in 1999 which makes it the 2nd and 3rd of January.

As I will also be visiting our WTBA people in France, I will probably hold a one day thing down in Britany as well.

I will inform you all of this in a later issue of C&H.

WTBA News

March 1998

The new year has sprung and the WTBA is once again into full swing, growing naturally and lovingly with those who would be Kings falling by the wayside and those who wouldn't, just getting better and better.

Our new home pages are proving to be very popular with hits of around 150 per day! I have put out a lot of free items including Traditional Chinese Medicine charts, Taiji healing charts and dim-mak point location charts.

Ken Johnson, our representative for Scandinavia has moved with his wife **Anita, his children, Sabrina, Melvin** and Louis to the island of Mallorca. Ken now takes up the position of Spanish representative while his able and willing students in Norway continue to run things there.

Our Cuban representative, **JJ Tappanes** is going well over there despite the postal service! It takes at least 3 months for his magazine to arrive by airmail! JJ is moving more and more into the healing areas of Taijiquan, which is the way it should go when one matures. He is spreading the word about real Taijiquan in Cuba.

The new book written by myself, "**Internal Gung Fu, Volume One, Qi**" is selling well and is obviously now available from Moon Ta-gu Books in Australia. It is also available from **Tony Court** in Wales and from **Jack and Bev Gustafson** in Minnesota, USA. We still have copies left so get in early before there is a long wait for a re-print. The cost is either, £27.00 including postage from Australia or $US42.00 including postage to the USA from Australia. The cost for Australia is AUD:49.00 including postage in Australia.

The second volume, "**Practical Fighting, Healing and Training Methods from Internal Gung-fu**" is under way and should be ready mid-1998. It will include a chapter called "How to Gain the Power".

Camp 98 is well in advance in the registration area so get yours in soon as we are filling up quickly. Arrival date this year is the 29th of August (Bill Barnes' Birthday) and leaving day two weeks later Friday fortnight. Please be in touch with **Mause Eaglen** either by fax: +61 (0)2 6679 7133 or by phone: +61 (0)2 6679 7015 for details and cost etc.

Mause can also handle inquires for my "banned" books! Would you believe it! Two of my books have been banned in my own country because they have the word "death" in the title. No one reads them to find out what is in them, they just ban them! All of my other titles are getting through including the Encyclopaedia which sell out the minute we receive new stock.

My old friend **Ng Siu-wing** has been made WTBA

representative for Hong Kong. He has been practising for the better part of his life with some wonderful masters. I met him while training myself in Hong Kong back in 1981 and he has never forgotten me or I him.

Zdeneck Kurfurst in the Czech Republic is going well with the following:

"Some news from Czech Republic: We grow up, because we have now 6 clubs in Czech Republic and 2 clubs in Slovak Republic. They are small clubs but people like practise, and it's good."

*Zdeneck trains with **Francois Hainry** our French Representative and has attended my workshops in Europe.*

We now have WTBA people in **Israel. Eli Binyamin** has joined the WTBA. He runs several Gung-fu schools in Israel and was put onto us by one of my friends in Israel and student of Eli, **Zamir Kimhi**. They are currently studying from the videotapes.

Thank you from all of those who inquired as to our safety due to the usual summer fires in Australia. I remember one year I was due to fly out to the USA and we were ringed with bush fires ready to flee when the rains came. But that's just a part of living where we choose to live.

Another of our members in France, **Thierry Bae** has opened his own dawgwan where he lives. He and his lovely wife **Marianne** are dancers with some pretty hefty French companies. In fact, we now have three WTBA teachers in France, all down in the South.

To raise the qi:

A small phrase that has caused some confusion over the years. How do we do this and why? Shouldn't the qi be seated in the tantien?

The qi is seated in the tantien, the 'jing' flows upwards to all parts of the body. The qi is 'cooked' and 'boils' over turning into 'steam' and then rises. This is what it all means. It is advisable to have the jing rising and this can be done simply by doing Taijiquan at its most advanced levels of 'small frame'. You know when the jing has risen because your arms in particular will feel light and will want to do the movements up higher than doing Taijiquan at the basic levels. If in fact we look at the 'classics', we see that they were all written with the 'small frame' form in mind. So when beginners read the classics and then try to add them to their basic form and way of doing form, it just means nothing! For instance the classic of 'the eyes look past the hands'. Doing basic form, for instance 'wave hands like clouds'; the hands are at chest level, so the eyes cannot look past the hands as they would be looking down! And we know that the classics also say that we should look laterally to the ground. But when we perform 'small frame' form, the hands automatically rise up so that in 'wave hands like clouds' posture, we are actually looking through the hands to infinity, the hands are moving at eye level! And this holds true for the whole form for the most part.

When the jing is raised, the qi is heavy and seated in the tantien. In fact, the jing cannot raise nor the qi be seated until both things happen. Hence the classic saying of 'we must perform the form like as if we are walking under water'. When the jing raises, it feels just like as if we are doing the form under the water.

At **Camp 98**, I will be using the Old Yang Style as one of the backdrops (along with push hands) and I will be pursuing the aspect of 'raise the qi'. I will also be covering all of the other classic sayings and will be trying to explain them physically.

As mentioned earlier in this magazine, I will be visiting **Europe** around Christmas 1998 and into 1999. This is mainly a trip for my family as I have travelled extensively but they have not, However, I will be giving two small workshops. One in **Wales** with Peter Jones and Tony Court on the 2nd and 3rd of January. Now I know that this is holiday time and that some may not be able to attend. That's OK, but it is my only time for some time in Europe!

The other workshop will be an informal gathering down in **Brittany** with **Francois Hainry,** our WTBA representative for France. Here's the rub though, only WTBA members or MTG customers and/or their student will be able to attend either of these workshops. I will not be opening it up to outsiders as I visit overseas so little nowadays that it should only be for our own members and customers.

I will probably cover in Wales two of the Qi disruptive katas if possible! And anything else that people wish to go over given time and to break up the day with something else other than the katas.

Don't know what the cost or venues will be as yet, I would suggest contacting our people running things about that area. Peter Jones held a very successful WTBA gathering in Wales this year, however, it was summer! And as this will be mid winter, I would suggest that both workshops would be indoors. We will be visiting and spending Christmas day with **Bill and Miriam Barnes** up in Manchester and spending the New Years day in Wales. If this all works out OK and does not break the bank so to speak, we will be doing this every year, perhaps the USA and Canada the following year and Africa the following. That's all very much in the future, for now we are concentrating upon Europe.

Qi, The Book

MOON TA-GU BOOKS
POB 792
Murwillumbah NSW 2484
Australia
+61 (0) 2 6679 7145
FAX: +61 (0)2 6679 7028
Email: taiji@ozemail.com.au

The definitive book on Qi in Internal Gung-Fu by **Erle Montaigue** is now published. The first volume called "**Qi**" is now available.

In this first volume the illusive and often guarded area of qi (ch'i, ki) is discussed. All you ever wanted to know about qi is included in this volume in seven chapters and around 165 photos. You will not read about "photos of qi" being emitted, nor will you read about people being thrown great distances using qi power! Practical and useful information about the gaining of and use of qi is discussed both for the martial arts and the healing arts.

CHAPTER TITLES:

Introduction. What is qi, how is it used.

Chapter One: Taijiquan. All aspects of this great healing and deadly martial art.

Chapter Two: Bagwazhang. A revealing insite into this often forgotten but deadly fighting art.

Chapter Three: H'sing-I Ch'uan: A brief but informative introduction to thei great internal martial art by Robb Whitewood.

Chapter Four: Transferring and issuing Qi: All you ever wanted to know (finally), about issuing and using qi for both healing and fighting.

Chapter Five: The Mind in the Fighting Arts: How the mind works and why we must perform certain things in internal gung-fu.

Chapter Six: Small Circle Taijiquan and Fighting: The much talked about but nothing ever done about most advanced area of taijiquan. The secrets revealed for the first time.

Chapter Seven: Traditional Chinese Medicine's view of Qi. By Wally Simpson.

COST: $US35.00
Freight to the USA: $US7.00
COST: $Aust: 45.00
Freight within Australia: $4.00
COST: £22.00
Freight to Europe: £5.00

Please make cheques out to **"Erle Montaigue".** Credit cards accepted: Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

Size: 29 CM X 21 CM: Approximately 154 pages with around 165 photos. Soft cover.

Profile on Annie Blackman

New Zealand

I started learning Taiji over twelve years ago.

Sometime before that I'd seen some people doing slow form and decided I wanted to learn it so when the opportunity arose I started a class and from that day on have incorporated Taiji into my life in such a way that it has become an effective transforming agent and a powerful means of expression.

Like so many Taiji students I was a bit off track for the first few years especially regarding the martial aspect

Like so many Taiji students I was a bit off track for the first few years especially regarding the martial aspect. Although I didn't read any books about Taiji for the first year or two, when I started I was inspired by talk of yielding, going with the flow, harmonious movement and softness. Intellectually I thought I understood quite a bit of the Classics and I was sure that if I stuck at it for years and years all would be revealed. Well, this is starting to happen but not at all as I had thought, planned or imagined.

I had had some previous contact with *Erle Montaigue* and in 1989 when I started to teach Taiji independently I went with a couple of students to Leura in the Blue Mountains to train with him. By this time I could see that what he was doing was what I wanted to do. I was also very impressed with his teaching method and style. I used to be a secondary school teacher so this was important to me. The main purpose of this trip was to learn how to teach Erle's style and to have everything I was doing corrected. I was very fortunate to have two students who were willing to learn from someone in my position; not quite the blind leading the blind but at times pretty close to it. I needed partners for the paired work and they were happy to learn with me. Both these people are still doing Taiji and one of them is now an independent authorised instructor for the World Taiji Boxing Association.

That ten days of training with Erle was a great experience. He had started to produce his teaching videos so he filmed the sessions and they became The Workshop Modules.

That ten days of training with Erle was a great experience. He had started to produce his teaching videos so he filmed the sessions and they became The Workshop Modules. It took a couple of years to get a grip on all this stuff. There is a stage in the process where a

lot of physical training needs to be done. Internal development relies on good physical technique and the kind of strength that develops from this kind of training together with Qigong and the forms.

Since then I've gone to Oz once a year to train with Erle The WTBA camps started in 1990 and there has always been a strong Kiwi presence. The opportunity to meet other instructors and students from around the world is beneficial and a lot of fun although nothing replaces the insights gained from your own daily training. From filming training and correcting sessions I learnt how to learn from videos. They are a very effective resource for those who live at a distance from Erle, so long as there is access to personal training with Erle or someone else who is qualified to check what has been learnt.

Erle's pragmatic teaching style has been significant in the development of my Taiji and Bagwa. He is a very accessible and open teacher with an irreverent sense of humour. He has the ability to get across an underlying principle, to explain where a technique or training method is leading and can demonstrate the end result. This goes for the whole area of health and internal strength as well. Although initially reluctant to adopt some of Erle' s suggestions regarding diet, years later I find myself having followed my own inclinations healthwise, with a lifestyle not very different from what seemed so radical a few years ago.

Another aspect of Erle's style, which sits well with me, is that he shies away from bureaucracy with its attendant hierarchies. WTBA instructors are free to develop our own teaching styles.

Another aspect of Erle's style, which sits well with me, is that he shies away from bureaucracy with its attendant hierarchies. WTBA instructors are free to develop our own teaching styles. For example I'm not comfortable with grading systems. Because Taiji and Bagwa techniques are directed at the subconscious with the aim of influencing physical reflex actions, I prefer to encourage students to become aware of what they are doing and where they are at for themselves rather than relying on some outside authority. Obviously not every instructor will share these views but we are free to either follow a set grading schedule or not, as we choose.

I share Erle's goal of promoting the teaching of Taiji in a systematic way, which leads to the deepest and highest levels of healing and martial accomplishment. In this respect, if a student wishes to instruct, has been with me for at least three years and can execute the forms precisely and physically competently I recommend them to Erle for an instructor's grade. Erle will look at them in general training at a workshop or at camp and make a judgement from there.

Annie Blackman

I now no longer teach beginners as much as I did but I take weekend workshops out of Auckland and find that very rewarding- I'm a very family oriented person with a little grand-daughter here on Waiheke Island where I grow trees on a rocky hillside and a grandson in Tauranga who makes taking a workshop there extra special.

Are You Going To Protect Yourself

By Radoslaw Wojcjechowski: Poland

I have been a WTBA member since January 1997 and certainly I do not understand Taijiquan. Mr Montaigue is the first person who gave me explanation of what Taijiquan is about. Before, I met people who couldn't say what is the meaning of these slow moves and how I can use them effectively. In conclusion, I thought it was kind of strange ballet without any practical application.

Now I am learning about dim-mak strikes, fa-jing, Qigong, Qi disruption forms. These methods are treasures and I know that out of generosity of Mr Montaigue, I am learning them.

Now I am learning about dim-mak strikes, fa-jing, Qigong, Qi disruption forms. These methods are treasures and I know that out of generosity of Mr Montaigue, I am learning them. I really owe him much. When you are training with these methods it is obvious they were designed for self-defence, (besides Qigong of course) – as Mr Montaigue has said many times.

That is why I was shocked when I read in September's issue of Combat & healing and article "Who am I" by Mr Jim Marincic. Mr Marincic writes that a Martial artist who is trying to be able to defend himself is a person with huge ego problem. He says, "relax man, if you take life too seriously, it's not good, it becomes too difficult".

I understand it's personal thing how you approach life – seriously or not. But shouldn't we remember that as martial arts instructors we're influencing many people's lives? And consequences of such teaching can be fatal for them.

If they are not prepared, they will be harmed. What is wrong with being able to defend yourself? Qigong is also method of self-protection as are safety belts in your car.

Next we read, "Taijiquan has Taoist philosophy as its origin. So if you are practising as true Taoists, you will never, ever be in situation where you will have to defend yourself against physical attack".

Then question arises; why true Taoists invented Taiji/Dim-mak? To experiment with innocent people, what about Qi disruption methods? Moreover, we have 2nd Dim-mak kata which looks like it is attacking kata. It means even Taoists considered the possibility of physical attack and considered very deeply because the effect of their work is so detailed and versatile. Of course, I'm not saying that in every situation we should use dim-mak

methods. There are safer methods and it depends upon the degree of the damage you are in. But these values of self-protection are present in every branch of Chinese Medicine/Acupuncture, massage, Qigong, Herbology and we all know they have the same root as Chinese fighting arts. Especially internal.

Many people through the ages were improving these methods for future generations. That is wealth of knowledge and very practical knowledge. Why shouldn't w use it and have healthier and safer life?

Many people through the ages were improving these methods for future generations. That is wealth of knowledge and very practical knowledge. Why shouldn't w use it and have healthier and safer life? The need to be safe is one of the deepest longings of humanity, the choice is yours.

Editor's Note:

As an end note from the Editor: Actually, the internal martial arts were not invented by Taoists! They were invented by Family groups. Taoists did not invent any fighting systems as we are told. The famous Yang family for instance was Buddhist, not Taoist. Their family system was for self-defence as it was really needed back then.

Actually, I think that there was something missing in Jim's translation as I received a number of such letters. Jim Marincic is not one to turn away from the fighting system, in fact it has been his goal to push Taijiquan as a great self-defence system and he is indeed a great martial artist himself. I am sure if Jim and Radoslaw got together, they would find much in common, especially over a slab of cold Fosters! ... Eh Jim!

Erle Montaigue on Healing

Don't take your martial art too seriously. Do not live for your martial art, but rather 'martial art to live'.

How could anyone take the martial arts seriously? I mean the modern concept of the martial arts, the film stars, the fake fights, totally unrealistic techniques etc. I know people who will stand up in a bus while passing their dojo and bow saying "oos"! To take something that seriously, is to make it into something other than life, something that is apart from normal life, something were we have to do something different in order to practice. A special time of day, a special suit etc. Men in particular tend to take the martial arts seriously to the point of distraction because they are just so afraid of being beaten in a fight. So they practice their martial art purely for the physical self defence area. How silly, training your whole life in a life art, waiting for the one time 'if you're unlucky', when you could be attacked! It's like the woman who spent her whole life learning how to move a matchbox using her mind! Why, when we can move it by pushing it and not have to waste a whole lifetime.

The martial arts are a way of life, something that is normal, a way of self-defence in both a physical sense and also in a microscopic sense. That of warding off disease and healing of others. And if we leave out any part of the martial arts training, then we lose the whole. If we practice the martial arts purely for the sake of the martial arts and self-defence, then we are not doing the martial arts! If we do the martial arts purely for the healing side, then we are not doing the martial arts. This is like having yin with out yang and that is impossible.

The highest levels of any great martial system is the healing area, but we learn this area through the self defence area as we use the same energy for self defence as we do for healing. I do not mean the very basic and often useless, kick/punch type of martial arts, but rather the internal; qi or energy orientated martial arts. Learning an internal martial art is a relatively easier way to enter into the higher levels of both self healing and healing of others using energy.